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ABSTRACT

This document describes a teacher-developed, elementary school level program that teaches conflict resolution through children's literature. This is a whole language/peace education program in which children learn creative ways to solve conflicts by reading and writing stories about conflicts. The document opens with a reproduction of the program description as it appeared in an Impact II catalog of exemplary programs developed by New York City teachers. This is followed by a brief paper entitled "Peace Education and Conflict Resolution in the Inner City," presented by the text of a speech given by Diane Shatles, who developed the program, at an international conference on reading held in London (England) in 1986. The bulk of the document presents the program itself through descriptions of lesson plans and other materials. The lesson plans are: (1) What Is a Friend?; (2) Developing the Concept of Conflict as Being a Difficult but Normal Part of Life; and (3) Conflict Resolution--Stealing. Also included are a diagram of a sample conflict web, a worksheet on "What is Conflict?", a diagram of the problem solving cycle, and other problem solving exercises. A 23-item list of appropriate children's literature grouped by theme, a 9-item resource list, and a 24-item list of useful children's books are provided. (JB)

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Conflict Resolution through Children's Literature

Elementary School
Social Studies/
Communication Arts

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Grades 3 through 6

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The Program

Conflict Resolution through Children's Literature is a peace education/whole language program in which children learn creative ways to solve conflicts by reading and writing stories about conflicts. In addition, the children study other valuable peace education concepts—namely, cooperation, affirmation, and communication. This literature-based program utilizes whole-language techniques such as brainstorming, semantic mapping, role playing, journal writing and bookmaking.

The children begin by developing an understanding of conflict. They brainstorm their experiences with a particular aspect of conflict, such as fighting or stealing. The students then either listen to, or read, a story containing a fight; e.g., ***Bang Bang You're Dead***, by Louis Fitzhugh, (Harper and Row, New York, 1986)—or a story about a stealing incident; e.g., ***Arnie and the Stolen Markers***, by Nancy Carlson, (Viking, New York, 1987). The story is read up to the point where the conflict needs to be resolved. The children then start to employ problem-solving techniques to generate their own possible solutions. When the children resume reading the story, their solutions are compared with the one the author selected. Follow-up activities include book and journal writing and role playing. Mediation techniques are taught and practiced.

Lesson plans, a bibliography, samples of student writings, information on concept development techniques, and a resource list are available.

The Students

Sixty remedial reading students in grades 3 through 6 participate in the program three times a week. The program can be adapted for any age, grade, or achievement level.

The Staff

The program was developed and is implemented by Diane Shatles, who has had 21 years of teaching experience, including 11 years as a licensed reading/writing teacher of grades K through college, and four years of involvement in the District 15 model peace education program. The school's administration and the parents association actively support both peace education and whole-language teaching.

Materials and Facilities

Various peace education curriculum bulletins are suggested, such as ***Resolving Conflict Creatively***, A Draft Teaching Guide of the Model Peace Education Program (New York City Board of Education, 1986), and ***Creative Conflict Resolution*** by William Kreidler (Scott Foresman, Glenview, Illinois, 1984). In addition, many trade books that explore conflicts are recommended. These include ***The Hating Book*** by Charlotte Zolotow (Harper and Row, New York, 1969) and ***The Snow Kings*** by Ellen Shire (Walker, New York, 1969).

Outside Resources

Class trips to the school and local libraries to find additional readings are recommended.

Overall Value

Developer Shatles believes that the children gain independence in solving conflicts, as well as in their ability to read and write. "Sharing solutions to problems fosters awareness of one's own and others' feelings," she reports. "The children are enthusiastic about the program because it helps them cope with important problems in their lives."

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Peace Education and Conflict Resolution in the Inner City

A speech wriiten and delivered by Diane Shatles at the World Conference of Reading,London, England,July 1986.

First I would like to say how wonderful it is to be meeting an international community of reading people. The field of reading and writing in the United States is very exciting as we now bring the whole language concept to our teaching.The foundations for this more humanistic approach came to us from the works of educators from Britain, New Zealand, Canada and Australia.

Next I would like to speak about my experiences with American children. While they are improving in their reading and writing skills, I have found that they have alot of trouble getting along with each other. While young people are much more open in expressing their feelings, they can't cope with all their,feelings. The end result is that the children exhibit hostility in dealing with each other. The less verbal children resort to physical abuse, while the more verbal children yell at each other alot.

What drew me to the District 15 Peace Education Program was a need to help children aquire alternate stategies for resolving conflicts, as well as my own personal desire to see a more peaceful world for the children to grow up in. I believe that the frightening condition that the world is in today is contributing to the fears and pressures on the children.

There are four main concepts at the basis of the peace education curriculum. These include: affirmation, communication, cooperation and conflict resolution. Affirmation means acceptance of other people. We allow people the time to say and express: -This is what I am about.- Others are encouraged to hear,accept and celebrate their samenesses and differences. Affirmation techniques include what we call go-arounds. Each person has a chance to speak and tell something about themselves or their ideas,while others listen.

The importance of the second concept, communication, has become even clearer to me after a two week stay in London, as I once again learn many subtleties of my own language. We are beginning to realize that most of the speaking in American classrooms is done by the teachers. The concept of communication recognizes the need to allow more time for children to talk to each other. A simple way of doing this is brainstorming-throwing out an idea to the chidren and allowing for all responses. There are no right or wrong answers.

Cooperation is an essential aid in improving relationships and involves getting children to work on tasks together. You may pose a problem to a class and have four or five children work together towards a common goal.

Conflict resolution means taking the time to help children settle their disputes. We might teach them the win-win method of compromise. In this situation you ask each of the children involved in a conflict what is the problem they are experiencing and how they can solve the problem in a way that is acceptable to both parties. You might present them with a formal Problem Solving Format. In this format a problem is presented. Children are asked for all possible solutions and then choose the solution that best solves the problem. In this way children begin to apply rational thinking skills to their emotional upsets.

In the reading class all of the above concepts can be presented through children's literature in what I like to call the reading-writing-peace connection. You can read to the children or have them read materials that provide examples of affirmation,cooperation, communication and creative conflict resolution. The Hating Book, by Charlotte Zolotow is an example of this. In this story a child is snubbed by a close friend for no apparent reason. The hurt child does not confront her friend at first, although her mother urges her to do so. At this point in the story I stop reading to the children and ask them how they would handle the situation. I then finish reading the story which goes on to show the two girls talking , clearing up their conflict and continuing their friendship.
If you peruse your libraries and newspapers you will find many instances where the four peace concepts are the themes being explored. Let us also not forget that the best way to infuse these concepts into your own curriculum is to be a role model of a person who communicates honestly, cooperates with young people, affirms their identities and finds ways to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Lesson II - What is a Friend?

A. Read to the group Rosie and Michael by Judith Viorst, either before or after this lesson.
B. Go Around - each child tells "What do I want in a friend?" Teacher records responses.

NEXT SESSION

C. Reading Activity - teacher creates a rexo with each child's name and their criteria for a good friendship. Read rexo in pairs. Each child reads his/her partner's criteria.

D. Display - children draw pictures of themselves and their friends and write their friendship criteria on the paper. Create a friends bulletin board.

Lesson III - Developing the Concept of Conflict as Being a Difficult but Normal Part of Life

The Conflict Web

A. Children brainstorm all their ideas about conflict. If they are unfamiliar with the word give some examples or a similar definition such as "conflict happens when we disagree with other people." Include causes of conflict, types of conflict, results of conflict. Accept all answers.

B. Read - Teacher writes all of children's responses on blackboard, thus forming a semantic web. Review all items on blackboard.

C. Rexo - create a rexo of the conflict web. Have children read their ideas about conflict and add additional ones.

D. Cloze Story - from the children's responses create a cloze format story for children to complete. Children work in small, cooperative groups and discuss solutions.

E. Read Aloud - Bang, Bang You're Dead by Louise Fitzhugh.

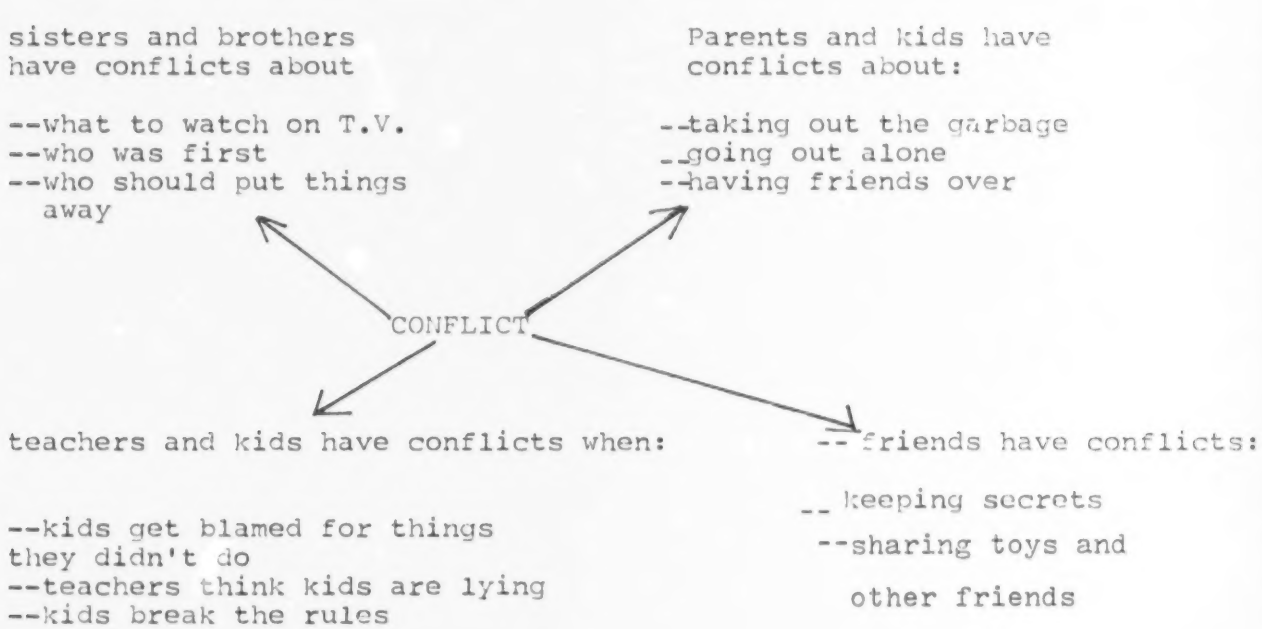
In this story, two groups of children want to play on the same hill. They decide to fight for the hill, but soon realize that there were no winners in the fight. They decide to share the hill, instead.

Use the "Problem Solving Cycle" and allow the children to find their own solutions.

Encourage the children to write similar stories from their own experiences of conflict.

SAMPLE CONFLICT WEB

WHAT IS CONFLICT? When we have a problem with other people and we can't get along with them.


sisters and brothers have conflicts about
--what to watch on T.V.
--who was first
--who should put things away
Parents and kids have conflicts about:
--taking out the garbage
--going out alone
--having friends over
CONFLICT
teachers and kids have conflicts when:
--kids get blamed for things they didn't do
--teachers think kids are lying
--kids break the rules
-- friends have conflicts:
-- keeping secrets
--sharing toys and other friends

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Reading Lab

What is Conflict?

Name_____

There are many reasons why conflicts happen. If someone (1)_____ something that belongs to you, there may be a conflict. Conflicts happen if you get pushed or (2)_____. When you (3)_____ a game you may get upset. If people don't (4)_____ each other there may be conflicts. Conflict can lead to (5)_____and fighting.

Some of the (6)_____ you may have conflicts with are: teachers, parents, brothers and sisters. Conflict makes you feel (7)_____. Your feelings are (8)_____ and you might want revenge. This can lead to more (9)_____.

Conflicts are a normal part of (10)_____, but can be hard to deal with.

1. [] eats [] steals [] buys
2. [] hit [] kissed [] hugged
3. [] play [] pick [] loose
4. [] trust [] fight [] plan
5. [] playing [] sharing [] yelling
6. [] things [] people [] animals
7. [] angry [] happy [] joyful
8. [] big [] hurt [] glad
9. [] games [] fun [] conflict
10. []life [] swimming [] books

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Problem Solving Cycle

I. 1. Read a story about a conflict situation.

2. Stop reading just prior to resolution of the conflict.

3. Have children brainstorm all solutions.

4. Discuss each solution. Write the children's responses to the solutions.

5. Vote on the best solutions.

6. Finish reading the story.

7. Compare children's solutions to the author's.

II. Chose a new story to read to the children.

Have children work in small groups or pairs to generate a list of solutions.

Continue problem solving cycle.

III. Move to a more personal situation.

Pose a conflict situation from the children's own experiences.

Continue problem solving cycle.

IV. Reading-Writing Connection: Have children write stories where conflicts occur.

Lesson IV Conflict Resolution - Stealing

A. Brainstorm with children about stealing. Create a semantic web of their ideas.

B. Read Aloud - Arnie and the Stolen Markers by Nancy Carlson. This book is about a boy who decides to steal a box of beautiful markers from the store of his friend Harvey. Arnie's mother discovers the markers. Arnie feels very guilty and confesses. He agrees to work for Harvey at the store to pay for the markers. Stop reading after Arnie's mother finds the markers.

C. Generate a List of possible solutions and or punishments for Arnie. Have children work in groups. Compile one list.

D. Discuss each solution. Comment on the appropriateness of each solution. Class votes on those solutions that are most acceptable.

E. Write Have children write narratives of possible solutions.

F. Conclude reading of Arnie and the Stolen Markers.

G. Compare author's solution to children's solutions.

Peace Education - Conflict Resolution through Children's Literature

Diane Shatles
PS 230
Brooklyn

Arnie and the Stolen Markers

Problem: Arnie stole markers . What are possible solutions to this problem?

SUGGESTIONS	COMMENTS
1. Hit Him	Don't hit kids.
2. Ground Him.	X *
3. Send him to Juvenile Hall.	Too harsh.
4. Give back the markers.	They are already open.
5. Work for the markers.	X
6. Can't go outside for 2 years. Can't go outside for 2 days.	Too harsh. X
7. Blow his head off.	That's murder!
8. Talk to him about it.	X
9. Listen to his side.	X
10. Keep an eye on him. (To see he doesn't do it again.)	X

* X Means most of group agreed.

Diane Shatles PSEN READING LAB

Mark Smuzhanitse Group 4

Problem: Arnie (or somebody you know) stole something and got caught.

What You Could Do

1. His mother could hit him.
2. He could go to jail.
3. Ground him.
4. Go to bed without supper.
5. Make him work for it.
6. Make him write 5 note books.
7. Make him do 12 pages of math.
8. Make him do 250 spelling words.

Arnie and the stolen Markers.

by Jennifer

CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
DIANE SHATLES

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Bang Bang You're Dead, Louise Fitzhugh and Sandra Scoppettone, Harper and Row , N.Y. 1969. Theme: Cooperation as an alternative to fighting.

The Snow Kings, ELLen Shire, Wakler & Co. N.Y. 1969. Theme: Dealing with prejudice and stereotypes, Cooperation as a way of solving problems.

Harriet and The Garden, Nancy Carlson, Puffen Books, N.Y., 1982. Theme: Conflict Resolution, value of confessing misdeeds.

The Stranger, Kjell Ringi, Random House, N.Y. 1968. Theme: Acceptance of differences.

The Hating Book, Charlotte Zolotow, Harper & Row, N.Y. 1969. Theme: Two friends solve a misunderstanding.

The Hunter and the Animals A Wordless Picture Book, Tomie de Paola, Holiday House, N.Y. 1981. Theme: Convincing a Hunter not to shoot animals.

AFFIRMATION OF SELF

Feelings, Aliki, Greenwillow Books, N.Y. 1984. Theme: Describing and naming a range of feelings.

Rosie and Michael, Judith Viorst, Altheneum, N.Y. 1979. Theme: Friendship

Honey I Love, Eloise Greenfield, Harper & Row, N.Y. 1972, Theme: Acceptance of self.

DEALING WITH NEGATIVE FEELINGS

There's a Nightmare in My Closet, Mercer Mayer, Dial Books , N.Y. 1968, Theme: Dealing with Fear.

Alexander and the Terrible Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. Judith Viorst, Aladdin Books, N.Y. 1972. Theme: Some days are just rotten.

The Temper Tantrum Book, Edna Mitchell Preston, Viking Press, N.Y. 1969. Theme: Learning to express angry feelings verbally.

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Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak, Harper & Row, N.Y. 1963, Theme: Dealing with anger towards one's parents.

The Quarreling Book, Charlotte Zolotow, Harper & Row, N.Y. 1963, Dedicated to Elizabeth Janeway, Theme: Conflicts.

NON-SEXIST THEMES

A Train For Jane, Norma Kein, Feminist Press, N.Y. 1974. Theme: Mother helps Jane get a toy that all think is more suitable for a boy.

William's Doll, Charlotte Zolotow, Harper & Row, N.Y. 1972. Theme: Here it is Grandma who gets William an non-traditional toy that he wants.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

First Night Away From Home, Byra Berry Brown, Franklin Watts, N.Y. 1960, Theme: Separation anxieties, Teddy bear saves the night.

The Terrible Thing that Happened At Our House, Marge Blaine, Parents Magazine Press, N.Y. 1975. Theme: Mother goes to work, the family must learn to do chores cooperatively.

Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1972, Theme: Separation anxieties, Teddy saves the night again.

SENSITIVITY TO SENIOR CITIZENS

Emma, Wendy Kesselman, Harper & Row, N.Y., 1980, Theme: Importance of meaningful work.

The Patchwork Quilt, Valerie Plourney, Dial Books, N.Y., 1985. Theme: Family togetherness helps family deal with illness.

Now One Foot, Now the Other, Tomie de Paola, G.P. Putnam, N.Y. 1981, Theme: Relationship between child and grandfather.

Resource List

Circles of Learning, Cooperatiion in the classroom. David Johnson and Roger Johnson, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Virginia 1984.

Children's Songs For a Friendly Planet Priscilla Prutzman and Evelyn Weiss, Children's Creative Response to Conflict Resolution, Nyack, NY 1986.

Creative Conflict Resolution William J. Kreidler, A Good Year Book, Scott Goresman Co., Glenview, Illinios, 1984.

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Open Minds to Equality A Sourcebook of Activities to Promote Race, Sex, Class and Age Equity, Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1983.

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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The following books explore the importance of various Peace Education themes such as cooperation, communication, affirmation of one's self and conflict resolution. Most of the books present a problem that is solved in a peaceful way. Children will benefit from brainstorming various solutions to each problem.

MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS by John Steptoe, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, New York, 1987
In this beautiful African folktale, goodness and kindness win over meanness as pride goes before a fall.

TIMOTHY GOES TO SCHOOL by Rosemary Wells, Dial Books, New York 1981
Timothy can't get accepted by the in crowd, then he meets a real friend. Individualism is a major theme in this story.

TWO GOOD FRIENDS by Judy Delton, Crown, New York 1974
Bear is sloppy but a great cook. Duck is a great housekeeper, but has no food. These two friends appreciate each other's differences and help each other out.

HARRIET AND THE GARDEN by Nancy Carlson, Puffin Books, New York,
Harriet tramples on a neighbor's garden, confesses , helps repair the damage and is forgiven.

CHESTER'S WAY by Kevin Henkes, Greenwillow Books, New York, 1988
Chester and Wilson have an exclusive friendship, but then Lilly arrives and opens their horizons.

WHEN I GROW UP by Heidi Goennel,Little Brown & Co., Boston, 1987
An easy to read book that affirms a child's control over his/her future.

SECRETS by Deborah Hautzig, Random House, New York, 1988
Ernie reveals Bert's secret that he can not count. The importance of trust is the theme.

A CAKE FOR BARNEY by Joyce Dunbar,Orchard Books, New York, 1987
Barney asserts his rights when taken advantage of.

THE WAY I FEEL SOMETIMES by Beatrice Schenk De Regniers, Clarion

Books, New York,1988
This delightful collection of poems affirms and names the many feelings that children have.

THE BIGGEST NOSE by Kathy Caple,Houghton Mifflin Co., New York,1985
Elephant and her friends come to accept each other's differences.

LOUDMOUTH GEORGE AND THE NEW NEIGHBORS by Nancy Carlson, Puffin Books,New York, 1987
George learns that his prejudice makes him lonely and isolated.

THE MOMMY EXCHANGE by Amy Hest, Four Winds Press, New York, 1988
Jessica and Jason switch homes for a night. They learn that the grass is not always greener.

DANNY AND HIS THUMB by Kathryn F. Ernst, Prentice Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 1973
Children can relate to Danny's struggle to give up his old habit.

BANG BANG YOU'RE DEAD by Louise Fitzhugh and Sandra Scoppettone, Harper & Row, New York, 1969
Two groups of kids fight for a hill. They decide that sharing is more fun than fighting.

MINE'S THE BEST by Crosby Bonsall, Harper & Row, New York, 1973.
An argument turns into a friendship.

SCHOOL, by Emily Arnold McCully,Harper & Row, New York, 1987
A wordless story about a preschooler who sneaks into school for a day.

MAKING FRIENDS by Fred Rogers, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1987
Mr. Rogers explores the joys of friendship.

MY FIRST MARTIN LUTHER KING BOOK, by Dee Lillegard, Children's Press, Chicago, 1987
The dream, the bus ride, freedom are some of the topics of this easy to read biography of the great peacemaker.

SHY CHARLES by Rosemary Wells, Dial Books, New York, 1988
Charles' shyness makes him feel bad about himself, Then there's an emergency and he speaks up loud and clear.

SAM JOHNSON AND THE BLUE RIBBON QUILT by Lisa Campbell Ernst,Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, New York, 1983

A beautiful country book that brings up issues of sexism, equality and cooperation.

THERE'S SOMETHING IN MY ATTIC by Mercer Mayer,1988

More explorations of childhood fears as in Mr. Mayer's earlier classic, There's a Nightmare in My Closet.

WILLY THE CHAMP by Anthony Browne, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1985

Sweet, scared Willy proves once again that the little person can win.

THE BIG ORANGE SPLOT by Daniel Manus Pinkwater, Hastings House, Publishers, New York, 1977

Individualism vs. conformity is the issue here as Mr. Plumbean decorates his house differently from all his neighbors.

OLD HENRY by Joan W. Blos, William Morrow & Co., New York,1987

Old Henry doesn't renovate his old house. The neighbors force him to move, but then they miss him. This beautifully illustrated book explores acceptance of differences.